

BALTIMORE CITY DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING
URBAN DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REVIEW PANEL
MEETING MINUTES

Date: November 29, 2012

Meeting No.: 157

Project: Harbor Point Design Guidelines

Phase: Discussion

Location: Baltimore Inner Harbor

PRESENTATION:

Michael Beatty, developer of Harbor Point; presented the proposed design guidelines for the project. The presentation focused primarily on the massing of the P.U.D., the developer's desire to have maximum flexibility for future market driven development, and the assured commitment to project excellence.

Time did not permit detailed review and discussion of all aspects of the proposed Design Guidelines prepared by ASG Architects. Specifically, discussions of streetscape, architecture design and sustainability were limited.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE PANEL:

The Panel acknowledged the intent of the Developer and Architect to achieve excellence in project design and implementation. It was noted, however, that flexibility alone is no guarantor of project excellence. The questions raised by the Panel were how do you define project excellence and how thru design guidelines can a positive predictive outcome occur. The draft document represented a good draft of the material to be covered and the charge is now to populate the Guidelines to be included with the PUD.

The Panel offered the following comments based on both the presentation and the content of the Draft Design Guidelines:

URBAN DESIGN:

- Define "Build-to" lines thru street sections which quantify building to building dimensions and sidewalk dimensions. Recognizing the importance of creating "urban rooms", build to lines must be required, with exceptions considered on a case by case basis.

- In addition to the sections included in the draft document, Point, Wills and Caroline Street sections must be provided and dimensions quantified.
- All street sections must identify the maximum height of adjacent building masses.

HEIGHT AND MASSING:

- The height and massing of each block needs to be absolute. A “maximum”, not to exceed height must be quantified.
- The apparent discrepancy in the massing diagram presented by the Developer and that articulated in the draft document and previous conversations must be resolved. Noted discrepancies occur along Dock Street and Caroline Street within Parcel 2 and Parcel 4.
- A discussion regarding foot plates allowable above a specific height should be investigative. All towers exceeding 185 feet in height must not exceed a maximum foot plate, 35,000 square feet, for example. Towers with footplates above 25,000 square feet in area must articulate the mass so as not to be accommodated in one monolithic volume.
- It appears that since the last UDARP presentation the tower on Parcel 3, which establishes the Eastern edge of Point Park, has been increased in height to 300 feet. The Panel had previously approved only three towers rising to 300 feet in height.
- If the goal, as stated, is to establish a prevailing base datum line of 100 feet in height for all blocks facing Central Plaza, then a percentage of each block must not exceed 100 feet in height. It should be investigated what that appropriate percentage should be.

STREETSCAPE:

- Successful streetscapes are those that have active, engaging ground level uses. To that end, it is recommended that a ground level use plan diagram be included to ensure significant retail uses occur along Central Plaza, Block and Point Streets. This diagram would also indicate where service and garage access areas are likely to occur.
- The street sections provided in the draft document indicated all sidewalks are 12 feet in width. Given the Developer’s intent to provide near continuous ground level retail fronting onto Central Plaza the Panel felt that these sidewalks should be wider to allow the opportunity for outdoor dining.

- In general, street trees must be addressed as they play a significant part in place making. What is the maximum acceptable spacing for trees? Will the development have one consistent street tree or will different streets or open spaces have different trees? How will the landscape and hardscape treatments be employed to signify a street hierarchy?
- Design Guidelines must address signage types and application: Project identification and way finding, Retail tenant signage, and Corporate Headquarters' signage. Questions to investigate are: Will retail tenant signage be restricted to the area below the second floor window sill line? Will retail signage be restricted to horizontal signage or will vertical blade signs be allowed in certain locations, like building corners? Where will corporate headquarters' signage occur and what size and area of coverage will be allowed. Will the development restrict advertising and sponsorship signage?

OPEN SPACE:

DIAGRAM:

- The open space diagram on page 11 must identify the six individual spaces for clarity.
- The diagram should identify where the pathway along the promenade may use a "softer style" paving, evoking a natural path and explain how this will meet ADA standards. Dimensions should be provided to quantify minimum width of the promenade walk.

CENTRAL PLAZA:

- To be successful, the Central Plaza must have enough cover soil to support healthy mid-size trees.
- As the noted "center piece" of the Harbor Point Development, the Panel expressed concern that not enough attention and detail has been devoted to creating a comprehensive vision for this significant open space and establishing guidelines for architects and landscape architects to successfully implement the vision. How does landscaping, hardscape, and architecture reinforce and differentiate this unique open space?

WEST PARK:

- Beyond the description provided in the draft document, West Park will serve as a vehicular drop-off court. What guidelines can be established to ensure pedestrian safety and dominance? North/South sections thru the auto court and at the pinch point of the two building is required to quantify sidewalk and vehicular zones. A

particular concern is the building on the southern edge of West Park that appears to project over the sidewalk near the Point Street intersection. This must be resolved. How does the landscape, hardscape and adjacent architecture work in composition to define West Park as a unique open space?

POINT PARK:

- The diagram provided on page 14 of the document must identify the maximum length and area where “soft style” paving is intended.
- A section must be provided between the buildings that define the gateway between Central Plaza and Point Park, with a maximum dimension established for this gateway.
- How does the landscape, hardscape and architecture working as a reinforcing composition differentiate this open space from others?

WATERFRONT PARK:

- In addition to the description provided in the November 12, 2012 document, Waterfront Park will also function as an auto court. What guidelines can be established to ensure pedestrian safety and dominance?
- How does the landscape, hardscape and architecture define and reinforce the vision for Waterfront Park? How, if any, does the adjacent proposed marina play a part in place making of Waterfront Park?

BUILDING DESIGN:

- The Panel noted that very little text (two paragraphs) was devoted to Building Design guidelines. Given the importance of architecture to create a unique district and positively define the unique character of the six open space opportunities celebrated in the Harbor Point Master Plan, additional effort would be merited. Relying on architecture “of its time” is no guarantee that architecture responses over time will be positive contributions to the public realm.
- The character of open space is not only established by the ground plane but by the architecture fronting the open space, creating memorable “urban rooms”. As presented, the distinguishing feature of Harbor Point is the six different open spaces. To that end, the guidelines provide no vision as to how the adjacent architecture can reinforce each of these unique open spaces. For example, should the architecture fronting onto a pedestrian active Central Plaza focus on creating a detailed pedestrian scaled base with attention to storefront, awning, and canopy design? Should the architecture fronting onto Point Park, shielded on the lower

levels by clusters of trees, focus on creating varied roof top silhouettes? Should the architecture along Caroline Street in both scale and façade fenestration respond to the existing neighborhood context?

- The “Building Design Guidelines” in the draft document provide little specificity and fail to address architecture beyond Central Plaza. Additional guidelines are strongly recommended to ensure a positive, predictive outcome in which the architecture:
 - Reinforces the unique character of each open space in which it fronts,
 - Reinforces a pedestrian dominated, quality urban experience, and
 - Promotes a positive image on the city Skyline.

SUSTAINABILITY:

- Concern was expressed by the Panel that the sustainable practices outline in the draft document fails to address water run-off if the cap cannot be infiltrated. This must be addressed

ACTION/ NEXT STEPS:

Discussion only- no formal recommendation provided.

The Panel would like to see the Design Guidelines clearly articulate a vision offering specific guidelines to ensure a positive, predictable outcome. Beyond addressing the economic goal to be market responsive, it is the imperative to effectively articulate a positive vision of the public realm which successfully employs urban design, architecture, landscape, graphic and sustainable design to achieve that end. The Panel encourages continued dialogue with the Developer, the Architect and the City Department of Planning to continue creating a document that addresses these concerns and provides for a world class development.

ATTENDEES:

Marco Greenberg, Jonathan Flesher, Michael Ricketts, Michael Beatty – HEDG
Todd Harvey – BHC
Laurie Schwartz – Waterfront Partnership
Barbara Valeri – Towers at Harbor Court
Matthew Poe – ASG
Ryan Potter – Gallagher Evelius + Jones
Erik Zygmunt – Baltimore Guide
Steve Kilar – Baltimore Sun
Theo Ngongang – DOT

Ms Eig, Messrs. Bowden and Burns* - UDARP Panel

Tom Stosur, Anthony Cataldo, Christina Gaymon, Natasha Becker, Tamara Woods -
Planning